WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A data card reader for reading data from a data card possessing an integrated circuit and/or a magnetic stripe, comprising:

guiding walls that form a channel and that are connected to a receiver having an interior surface;

a magnetic reading head mounted on one of the guiding walls;

electrical contacts located on the interior surface of the receiver; and

a latch extending at least partially across the channel formed by the guiding walls.

2. The data card reader of claim 1, further comprising:

a chassis cavity;

wherein the latch is partially located inside the chassis cavity and includes a spring loaded slider.

3. The data card reader of claim 2, further comprising:

a motor connected to the latch; and

wherein the position of the latch is controlled using the motor.

4. The data card reader of claim 1, wherein the latch is pivotally mounted.

5. The data card reader of claim 4, further comprising:

a motor connected to the latch; and

wherein the latch position is controlled using the motor.

6. The data card reader of claim 1, wherein:

the data card cannot move through the channel past the latch, when the latch extends at least partially across the channel; and

the latch is capable of moving so that a data card can pass through the channel.

7. A data card reader for reading data from a data card possessing an integrated circuit and/or a magnetic stripe, comprising:

guiding walls that form a channel and that are connected to a receiver having an interior surface;

a magnetic reading head mounted on one of the guiding walls;

electrical contacts located on the interior surface of the receiver;

wherein the receiver comprises a base, a rear wall and side walls;

wherein the side walls form an entrance to the receiver;

wherein at least one of the base, rear wall or a side wall is located to have a surface that contacts the card when it is located within the receiver; and

wherein friction between the surface in contact with the card resists removal of the card from the receiver.

8. The data card reader of claim 7, wherein the receiver further comprises a top wall.

9. The data card reader of claim 7, wherein the side walls are also configured to form an opening in the top of the receiver.

10. The data card reader of claim 9, wherein:

the interior surface of the receiver is configured to contact the surface of the data card, when the data card is within the receiver; and

friction between the interior surface and the data card resists removal of the data card from the opening in the top of the receiver.

11. The data card reader of claim 7, wherein an interior surface of the receiver contains compressible features.

12. A data card reader for reading data from a data card possessing an integrated circuit and/or a magnetic stripe, comprising:

guiding walls that form a channel and that are connected to a receiver having an interior surface;

a magnetic reading head mounted on one of the guiding walls;

electrical contacts located on the interior surface of the receiver; and

at least one clip that engages a data card inserted into the receiver;

wherein friction between the clip and the data card resists removal of the data card from the receiver.

13. A data card reader for reading data from a data card possessing an integrated circuit and/or a magnetic stripe, comprising:

guiding walls that form a channel and that are connected to a receiver having an interior surface;

a magnetic reading head mounted on one of the guiding walls;

electrical contacts located on the interior surface of the receiver;

wherein the receiver comprises:

a base;

side walls; and

a roller mounted in a side wall of the receiver;

wherein the side walls form an entrance to the receiver and an opening in the top of the receiver;

wherein the roller is configured to rotate as the data card is inserted into the receiver through the receiver entrance; and

wherein friction between the surface of the roller and the data card resists removal of the data card from the opening in the top of the receiver.

14. The data card reader of claim 13, wherein the roller is non-axisymmetrical.

15. A data card reader for reading data from a data card possessing an integrated circuit and/or a magnetic stripe, comprising:

guiding walls that form a channel and that are connected to a receiver having an interior surface;

a magnetic reading head mounted on one of the guiding walls;

electrical contacts located on the interior surface of the receiver;

wherein the receiver comprises:

at least two side walls;

a rotating wedge mounted in one of the side walls; and

a card guide located on the opposite side wall;

wherein the rotating wedge occupies a first position prior to entry of a data card into the receiver;

wherein inserting a data card into the receiver when the rotating wedge is in the first position, causes the rotating wedge to rotate to a second position;

wherein attempting to remove a data card from the receiver when the rotating wedge is in the second position causes the rotating wedge to force the data card against the card guide in a manner that resists the removal of the data card.

16. The data card reader of claim 15, wherein the pivoting wedge comprises a spring loaded wheel housed within a ramped cavity in a side wall of the receiver.

17. The data card reader of claim 15, wherein the pivoting wedge comprises a wedge arm pivotally mounted within a cavity in one of the side walls of the receiver.

18. A data card reader for reading data from a data card possessing an integrated circuit and/or a magnetic stripe, comprising:

guiding walls that form a channel and that are connected to a receiver an interior surface;

a magnetic reading head mounted on one of the guiding walls;

electrical contacts located on the interior surface of the receiver; and

a sensor configured to detect movement of a card inserted into the receiver.

19. The data card reader of claim 18, wherein the sensor is configured to detect movement in excess of 50 mils.

20. The data card reader of claim 18, wherein the sensor is configured to detect movement in excess of 20 mils.

21. The data card reader of claim 18, wherein the sensor is configured to detect movement in excess of 10 mils.

22. A data card reader for reading data from magnetic stripes located on data cards and from integrated circuits located on data cards, comprising:

means for guiding the magnetic stripe on the data card past a magnetic reading head; and

receiving means for receiving the data card from the guiding means;

communicating means for communicating with the integrated circuit located on the data card; and

means for resisting removal of the data card from the receiver.

23. A method of reading data from a data card including a magnetic stripe and/or an integrated circuit having a set of contacts, comprising the steps of:

moving the magnetic stripe relative to a magnetic reading head;

applying forces to the card that resist motion of the card; and

reading data from the card while the forces that resist motion of the card are applied to the card.